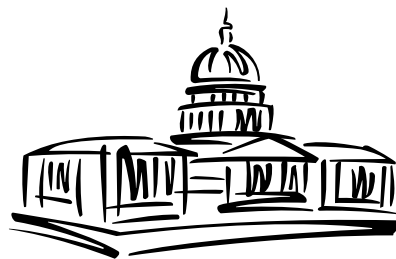


Medicaid Matters

Agency evaluating impact of DRA on state operations

The Alabama Medicaid Agency is now taking steps to evaluate the impact of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (P.L. 109-171) that was passed by Congress on February 8, 2006. According to Alabama Medicaid Commissioner Carol A. Herrmann-Steckel, the Agency will be closely evaluating the DRA's provisions in a number of areas, including long term care insurance, rules pertaining to asset transfer and optional services including the Money Follows the Person (MFP) demonstration project (section 6071), among other provisions.



In addition to the new provisions, the DRA will provide the state with approximately \$140 million for Hurricane Katrina relief from the federal government. Funds will be used to offset expenses associated with services offered to hurricane evacuees who relocated to Alabama.

General Fund budget moves through Alabama Legislature

With less than two months left in the 2006 regular session of the Alabama Legislature, the Alabama Medicaid Agency is continuing to monitor the progress of the proposed General Fund budget for FY 2007. The General Fund, the source of state dollars for the Alabama Medicaid Agency, passed out of the Senate Finance and Taxation-General Fund Committee on March 1 and is expected to go to the floor of the Senate for consideration on March 14. The proposed General Fund budget includes \$398 million for FY 2007, the state's share of the Agency total proposed budget of \$3.9 billion.

[Click here](#) to see Commissioner Carol A. Herrmann-Steckel's FY 07 budget presentation.

Agency working toward implementation of new MMIS system

The Alabama Medicaid Agency is now taking steps to implement a new Medicaid Management Information System (MMIS) in order to meet a federal government mandate as well as to increase the efficiency and effectiveness with which provider claims will be processed in the future.

The new system, known as Interchange MMIS, is scheduled to go into production on May 23, 2007, the same day the new National Provider Identification (NPI) system mandated by the federal government is required to be in place.

In addition to meeting the mandate, the new MMIS will offer enhanced claims processing features, increased accountability and control to reduce potential fraud and abuse and greater access to detailed information for program analysis, according to Paul Brannan, Agency MMIS Coordinator.



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 - ◆ Using Medicaid's Recipient Call Center
 - ◆ Helpful Resources and Links on Medicaid's Website

Medicaid Working with Others on Proposed Hospice Legislation

The Alabama Medicaid Agency is working closely with provider associations, the Alabama Department of Public Health and state health planning agencies in support of legislation to ensure the provision of quality services to hospice patients through implementation of a certificate-of-need (CON) process for hospice providers and other measures.



Sponsored by Rep. Ron Johnson (R-Sylacauga) and Senate Health Committee Chair Larry Means (D-Attalla), House Bill 444/Senate Bill 445 provides for the Department of Public Health to conduct quality surveys similar to those conducted for other providers, limits duplication of services through a CON process and allows quality and cost containment assurances needed to recommend ending the current hospice moratorium. Medicaid spent \$45.4 million for hospice services in FY 2005, up from \$7.1 million in 1999.

Agency officials emphasize that the proposed bill will not cause Medicaid-eligible individuals to lose access to necessary hospice services, nor exclude input from interested parties. According to Medicaid Commissioner Carol A. Herrmann-Steckel, the hospice bed methodology will be established after public comment to and review by the State Health Planning and Development Agency, the State Health Coordinating Council and the Legislative Council.

Using Medicaid's Recipient Call Center



Recipients with questions or in need of assistance can call **Medicaid's Recipient Call Center toll-free at 1-800-362-1504** from 8 am. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday or by emailing the center at rcchelp@alxix.slg.eds.com. The RCC is available to answer questions, help recipients change Patient 1st personal doctors, locate an eligibility worker or refer callers for other assistance.

[Click here for an easy-to-read one-page handout](#) on using the Recipient Call Center.

Medicaid Statistics by County now available for 2005

Need more information about Medicaid eligibles and spending in your county? An updated version of Alabama Medicaid Statistics by County is now available for 2005. This 13-page PDF document contains county-specific information on population, Medicaid eligibles and Medicaid payments by recipient and provider county. [Click here for a copy!](#)

Click below for helpful resources and links on Medicaid's website:

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